

Circom Regional

&

The Thomson Foundation

Introduction to Video Journalism Workshops Budapest, Hungary

Workshop 1: 24th – 30th October 2005

Workshop 2: 31st October – 5th November 2005

REPORT

BACKGROUND

These two consecutive courses followed the success of the first CIRCOM VJ course held in Budapest in October last year. Held at the European Youth Centre, a council of Europe establishment, we were not disappointed with the excellent course facilities and reasonable room and subsistence arrangements. Funding was provided by CIRCOM General budgets and further course support was provided by the Thomson Foundation, HRT Croatia and NRK Norway. The technical facilities were largely provided by Karol Cioma (cameras and laptop editing) and further cameras were brought by trainers Darko Flajpan , Magnus Brenna Lund and also course participants. This gave the trainers more opportunity to give personal tuition to individual students to greater effect than the previous year.

Once again we thank MTV Hungary for their kindness and also their generosity in providing two splendid evening dinners for trainees and trainers - special thanks must to Hungarian National Coordinator Judit Klein for arranging this.

APPLICATIONS

Such was the popularity of the course in 2004 that we expected a high level of applications for 2005. Our expectations proved correct and by May it became apparent that we would need to run two consecutive one week courses to cope with the demand. Applications were received from more than twenty five TV journalists before August and Karol Cioma decided to bring the closing dates of applications forward by one week to September 2nd. All national coordinators were notified of this by email explaining that we

did not wish to disappoint more applicants than necessary. The total number of applications was thirty two. Sixteen of these were selected for the two courses – eight on each week.

SELECTION & DELEGATES

The selection process sought to represent as many countries as possible, as much gender balance as possible and various age groups. Two applications were received from older journalists who wished to re-train and both were accepted. The trawl for applicants produced, unusually, multiple requests from Ireland, Hungary and Spain not all of whom could be accepted. Those taking part were:

Course 1.

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|----------------------|---------------|
| 1. Antonia Micaleff | PBS Malta |
| 2. Donata Crusciel | TVP Katowice |
| 3. Irene Ni Nuallain | TG4 Galway |
| 4. Hrvoje Reder | HRT Zagreb |
| 5. Iñaki Rodriguez | TVE Bilbao |
| 6. John Sundstrom | TVSyd Kolding |
| 7. Michael Franz | BR Nurnberg |
| 8. Lázskó Mészáros | MTV Hungary |

Course 2.

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|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Iris Alfaro | TVE Bilbao |
| 2. Damir Simic | PBS BiH |
| 3. Viktor Dimitrov | BNT Sofia |
| 4. Jerzy Boj | TVP Gdansk |
| 5. Paul O'Flynn | RTE Dublin |
| 6. Rose Abelman | RTV Noord Holland |
| 7. Istvan Suba | MTV Hungary |
| 8. Miroslav Radojevic | RTV Montenegro. |

The course trainers were:

Ian Masters, Controller of Broadcasting for the Thomson Foundation - course leader.

Karol Cioma, a former BBC picture editor and trainer ran the practical elements of the course. Karol is the Circom Regional training project manager for the Thomson Foundation.

Darko Flajpan, an experienced camera operator and editor from HRT Croatia, provided expert guidance in modern filming and editing techniques.

Magnus Brenna Lund, a new member of the Circom Regional training team, is NRK Norway's most experienced video journalist. He's been working as a VJ since 2002.

All trainer services were provided free of charge by their respective employers and thanks must be given to them. Without this support these two courses could not have been presented within the budget allocated.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & STRUCTURE

The objectives of the course were to introduce participants to the basic techniques of video journalism – to understand and use cameras in daily news situations and to understand the basic rules of picture editing and to develop primary skills in editing their own shot material. The course was also designed to enhance their practical journalism skills in the areas of thinking in pictures, interviewing, pieces to camera and writing to pictures. The main target of the course was that each participant should be capable of returning to his / her station with the capability of planning, shooting and editing a straight forward news story – ready for transmission.

The sequence of the course was as follows:

Day 1. Introducing and explaining the technical equipment.

Practical exercises on using cameras and material review and feedback.

Day 2. Lecture and discussion on best practice interviewing techniques.

Practical exercises on shooting and editing interviews and appraisal of work.

Day3. Lecture and discussion on best practice pieces to camera and writing to pictures.

Practical exercises in shooting and editing pieces to camera and writing to pictures.

Day 4. Planning and researching real stories.

Day 5. Shooting real stories.

Day 6, Editing full news story. Full appraisal and feedback on final stories.

The line up of one senior editorial trainer, one experienced VJ reporter, one senior picture editor and one experienced cameraman and eight course participants provided a perfect raft of personnel for one-to-one “hands on” coaching so necessary for teaching this technically complex subject.

RESULTS

The results of the week of training were fully satisfactory and even more impressive than the previous year. Both training courses provided some excellent stories and covered a host of subjects which included the Irish influx of property speculation in Hungary, Budapest’s fight against graffiti artists, a special theatre therapy course to assist in the cure of drug abuse, how many young people in Hungary are spending the price of a second hand car on acrobatic cycles, local opinion of “bird flu”, the high rate of suicide in Hungary and others.

The opinion of participants seemed to be that they had enjoyed the concept of the course and most felt they were now ready to develop their own video journalism experience. The trainers underlined the need for all participants to quickly build on the skills they had

learned by, where possible, seeking permission from their editorial managements to immediately undertake VJ assignments for their own programmes.

Each participant was given an appraisal for to assess the course and the findings, expressed in percentage terms, were:

Courses	1	2
1. Suitability of the course venue?	88	78.3
2. Suitability and comfort of the accommodation?	76.2	77.2
3. How adequate was the course teaching accommodation?	76.3	81.1
4. How well understood were the course targets?	92.1	87.2
5. How well did the course meet expectations?	87.2	85
6. How well were the course subjects chosen?	88	87.2
7. How understandable were the trainers?	80	88.3
8. How well did the trainers understand participants' problems?	87.2	92.2
9. How adequate were the technical facilities?	82.2	88.3
10. How much progress did participants make on camera skills?	76.3	85
11. How much progress was achieved on editing skills?	82.2	86.1
12. How well equipped were participants to now start VJ work?	81.1	78.3
13. How soon could participants put the learning into daily practice? (this statistic was governed by stations who had the actual equipment to proceed)	71.1	70

RECOMMENDATIONS 2006

All trainers were satisfied that the course had been worthwhile and successful and, if current understanding of future trends is interpreted correctly, should be repeated again in 2006 and a further series of at least two courses be proposed. The Budapest venue is, from a geographical point of view, central to CIRCUM members and easy to reach. The actual course venue is also perfect from a teaching and accommodation viewpoint and the costs are inexpensive in comparison with optional venues.

Consideration should be given to updating the editing system as they have now been in use for some 4 years and newer software and faster hardware is now available on the market.

Report prepared by Ian Masters and Karol Cioma, The Thomson Foundation 7/11/2005